

Planning Comments – 355 – 357 Shepperton Road – Potential Sale.

The Town is currently undertaking a substantial program of strategic planning reform, including:

- Preparation of Local Planning Strategy (estimated completion end of 2020);
- Preparation of a new Local Planning Scheme (estimated completion end of 2022); and
- Progressing a strategic framework for development in Albany Highway centres (estimated completion June 2021).

These projects will have substantial bearing on the future development pattern of the Town and its activity centres.

The proposal raises two key issues from a strategic planning perspective, being:

1. Should the Town be disposing of the public carpark; and
2. Is the development concept presented by the prospective buyer appropriate for this site?

Issue 1: Should the Town be disposing of the public carpark?

- The subject carpark is included within "Hotspot Area 2" of the Town's Parking Management Plan. The Parking Management Plan states that one of the management solutions for this area is "All day free parking in specific areas ...[including] All of Shepperton Road carpark".
- This management solution implies firstly that any development on the site should maintain the existing provision of car parking, and secondly that the Town should retain enough control of the carpark to ensure its continued availability for free, all day parking.
- The IMNS actions for parking including ongoing monitoring and review of the Parking Management Plan; examining the potential for parking caps in activity centres; adoption of reduced parking ratio requirements within the Local Planning Scheme; and examining potential for the Town to manage car parking on private land. It is possible that the outcomes of these actions might support removal or reduction of public car parking on the subject site. However, this cannot be confirmed until the actions have been completed and a strategic position agreed upon. This is reinforced by Policy/Position P6 of the IMNS, which provides that the Town should "Ensure decisions about future off-street public parking supply are informed by data, and support alternative modes as a priority".
- We understand that the parking team has reported anecdotally that the general area has a substantial amount of parking available and the subject site is often underutilised. This suggests that parking in the area is perhaps in need of review. Again, until this work is completed it is difficult to confidently form the view that the subject carpark is surplus to requirements.
- Additionally, the Town must consider whether the site might be required for a different civic use. Note that the Draft Public Open Space Strategy does not flag a need for additional public open space in this precinct. Further work on the review of the draft Social Infrastructure Plan and draft Local Planning Strategy is required before it can be definitively said that there is no land requirement in the area for civic purposes, although it is unlikely.

Issue 2: Is the development concept presented by the prospective buyer appropriate for this site?

- The subject site is zoned "Urban" under the Metropolitan Region Scheme and "District Centre" under the TPS1. In the "District Centre" zone, uses including "Fast Food Outlet", "Liquor Store – Small", "Lunch Bar", "Office", "Consulting Rooms", "Restaurant/Café" and "Shop" are permitted uses, and a wide range of other commercial uses are designated discretionary. There is no outright basic land use or zoning requirement prohibiting redevelopment of the site for a supermarket although any future Development Application that might be received will be assessed in accordance with the Planning Framework at that time.
- The Town's Activity Centres Strategy states that the "East Victoria Park Gateway Shopping Area", in which the subject site is located, should be "consolidated into a 'gateway' shopping node serving regional and local populations". This is a statement echoed from the TPS1 Precinct Plan for Albany Highway. A supermarket could be contemplated within this broad statement. Further, many of the broad statements around mixed use relate to Albany Highway and not the centre edges.
- It is also noted that there is an existing Aldi supermarket and Bunnings store in the St James centre, which have a substantial impact on the centre's function, parking arrangements and character. A second supermarket would not generally be inconsistent, although the format of the supermarket within a shopping centre does present a shift in dynamic.
- Notwithstanding the above, the strategic vision for the area as an activity centre is still somewhat unresolved. The Activity Centres Strategy does not support preparation of an Activity Centre Structure Plan in keeping with State Planning Policy 4.2, however, it does recommend that *"the Town build on and enhance the points of difference between the Albany Highway Secondary Centre and the expanding super regional centres"*. Alongside this is the need for the Town to accommodate its infill housing targets and strengthen local character of the centre through its place planning approach. Further, the Town is currently preparing a draft Local Planning Strategy and anticipating a review of the IMNS. These documents may adopt a different strategic approach to earlier planning documents as the Town and greater Perth metropolitan area respond to rapidly changing economic conditions, population, sustainability goals and housing and lifestyle choices.
- In the context of the before mentioned changing conditions it is important to consider the future of the Town's mid-sized centres and high streets. Car based retail models with large amounts of parking (such as that proposed by the prospective purchaser) are based on attracting customers at a district/regional scale, which may put the centre in direct competition with similar centres in the area (including those in the Town). Centres that accommodate a large local population through dense development; place a high priority on accessibility (all necessary goods and services within close proximity of the residential population) and lower priority on mobility (highly efficient vehicle movement with lots of parking) are likely to be more resilient in the future because they have a captive local market and are less reliant on a regional customer base (self-sufficiency). The Town's endorsed Activity Centre Strategy makes this point in its commentary on the emergence of competing 'super regional centres' and a need for the Town to 'build on and enhance the points of

difference between the Albany Highway Secondary Centre (which includes the St James Town Centre) and the expanding super regional centres'. This is a consideration amongst others in any decision regarding the Towns land and the bid from the prospective purchaser.

In conclusion, Place and Urban Planning does not have a firm view on either the disposal of the carpark or introduction of supermarket / small shopping centre at this time, beyond the action in the Parking Management Plan for the subject carpark to be retained. Further resolution of the strategic planning framework (as identified above) and a review of the Parking Management Plan would ideally have taken place before determining the disposal of the site although it is acknowledged that bids such as these do not always present at the ideal time from a strategic planning perspective. We ask that the above comments be taken as a consideration amongst others in the decision making process.